

22 November 1969. 4th Qualifying Round F.A. Amateur Cup v
Hertford Town (home)

AS prospective giant-killers, Hertford Town lasted just 17 minutes before a trick of sheer opportunism from the wily Keith Blunt set Wycombe Wanderers back on an even keel in Saturday's fourth qualifying round, Amateur Cup tie, at Loakes Park.

From then on, with the Isthmian's frontrunners in fine form, and for once overshadowing their colleagues in 'Delaney's defence', it was plain sailing.

The elusive, fluid forward play produced in unison by Searle, Busby, Horseman and Anthony, would have taunted most top-line amateur backrows.

And such a combination, with the essentially attacking wing-half role carried out by Blunt adding extra punch, should be afforded every encouragement: it means goals galore if allowed to mature, and, just as important, it could mean the instilling of consistency into Viv Busby's enigmatic football.

But at first, Saturday looked anything but a day for heroes: from Wycombe's viewpoint that is.

Chasing promotion at the head of Athenian League division one, Hertford were fully keyed up to challenge for a place in the draw for round one proper.

They had Wanderers reeling and red-faced in two minutes, when a low flighted corner kick was allowed to run freely across goal. Smart, once also an Isthmian with Wealdstone, accepted his chance to slip the ball past Maskell from close range.

Less than two minutes later, Wycombe gloom intensified as Tony Horseman was led off for treatment on an eye injury.

And, still down to ten men, Wanderers seemed up against it well and truly in the 9th minute as Bentley loosed an outswerver too close for their comfort.

Powerful play by Wanderers' frontrunners

Wycombe Wanderers 5, Hertford Town 1

Within seconds, however, Geoff Anthony put a stop to Hertford's romp before it got out of hand. His first-time shot was turned round a post for the first of five successive corners which made the visitors sweat, and gave Wanderers a control they never again lost.

Even so, only a hopefully outstretched foot by Maskell stopped Waldeck from increasing Town's lead in the 15th minute. Wycombe's keeper diverted the ball fractionally wide of the mark for a corner as Ian Rundle raced back to double cover.

Two minutes later, the Isthmians' attack smoothly went into action down the right wing, where Busby passed inside for Blunt to crash in the equaliser.

The former Dulwich Hamlet wing-half makes no pretence about his willingness to shoot, which is refreshing enough in these defensively minded days. But, if early evidence is to be heeded, he also has the precious quality that persuades others to follow suit.

Home smiles widened before Hertford had had a chance to restart the game as Horseman trotted back on-field. In fact those smiles were eventually to turn to positive glee by the time Tony had helped make three goals and indirectly caused a fourth.

Hertford were not so amused. Bill Fowler, the former St. Albans City goalkeeper, bobbed up to stop Geoff Anthony curling a shot in just under the bar, and full back Brown cleared after Horseman had put the ball goalwards from Blunt's pass.

Seconds later Delaney used his height to threaten Fowler, where he has (as the Saints', and seemingly now as Town's guardian) always been vulnerable in the air.

John had problems of his own though, and seeing a need for his defence to tighten, the Wycombe skipper was quick to dish out a verbal lashing when Hertford threatened to punish some slack covering in the 32nd minute.

There was no such easing among the forwards. In the next minute, Searle swung play left to right and Horseman sent in a waist high cross which Busby calmly stroked into goal to put Wanderers ahead.

Fowler reached a dropping Delaney header despite being unsighted, but he had no chance when the Wanderers' number five sent him the wrong way with a spot kick four minutes from the interval. The penalty was awarded after Brown handled yet another of Horseman's crosses.

Learning their lesson from the first half, Wycombe didn't give the Athenians a chance to rush them again at the start of the second. A quick Hertford goal would have thrown the game wide open once more. But instead Wanderers set the pace.

Pett kicked the ball off Busby's feet: Rundle carelessly

hooked wide of an open goal: and Fowler covered Anthony, Delaney and Blunt efforts in turn.

They might have stretched their advantage four further than just the half-time score of 3-1. Indeed, Hertford had a lucky let-off as Jeffries cleared Busby's "trickle shot" seemingly after it had crossed the goal-line.

They got away with it however, and not until Hertford had begun to make more of an impression on the game did the Wanderers finally score their fourth.

After 74 minutes, Horseman latched onto possession, then suddenly suspended his run to allow Searle time to overlap up the left wing. Keith swiftly out-paced Pett to shoot from an improbable angle, leaving both the left-half and Fowler sprawling in defeat on the ground.

A great goal — but no greater than the way Horseman advanced yards along the left touchline, before crossing inside for Busby to slam home number five off the inside of a post three minutes later.

Still not quite finished, Busby had less luck as another shot struck a post but rebounded away after 87 minutes.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; I. Rundle, C. Gale; J. Lalley, J. Delaney, K. Blunt; V. Busby, B. Baker, K. Searle, A. Horseman, G. Anthony. Sub.: V. Faulkner (not used).

Hertford Town: W. Fowler; J. Jeffries, K. Brown; T. Waldeck, R. Murphy, T. Pett; B. Bentley, R. Haiger, B. Smith, D. Smart, K. Heaven. Sub.: P. Long (not used).

Attendance: 2,705.

Wycombe 5 Hertford 1

AFTER CONCEDING a goal in the first two minutes Wycombe smacked home five to bundle Hertford out of the F.A. Amateur Cup.

Inside-left Smart's shock goal for Hertford coincided with another blow for Wycombe when key forward Tony Horseman had to go off.

But even with only 10 men for a time Wycombe soon established superiority and Blunt equalised.

Horseman returned to supply a pass from which Busby put them ahead, and just before half time Delaney made it 3-1 from a penalty. Wycombe continued to dominate in the second half when Searle and Busby added further goals.